

Unwitting Rivalry

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Author: Vyctori

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Summary: Jenna has had a crush on Isaac for as long as she can remember. When her group and his meet in Contigo, she believes it the perfect time to capture his heart. Yet what role does Mia play in his life?

***Chapter 1*: Unwitting Rivalry**

Unwitting Rivalry.
Vyctori

A/N: I wrote this for a *Golden Sun* fanfic contest on I had originally decided to wait to see whether or not I came first or second out of two (heh), but I'm too impatient, so I'm just going to post this now. Bah.

I've been writing a lot of one-shots lately, and I'd have to say I personally think this one is middle of the road. It's been percolating in my mind for quite some time, ever since I noticed the extreme absence of fics for this pairing. So this was written to rectify it. Hope you all enjoy!

Disclaimer: Don't own *Golden Sun*. Never will. Don't even particularly want to own it.

Warning: Saffic, a.k.a shoujo-ai, a.k.a. female/female pairing. Don't say I didn't warn you.

O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O

Jenna, chin propped up in her hand, stared across the seemingly limitless sea and sighed. She shifted her elbow slightly on the wooden rail of Piers' ship and sighed again. Then, a few minutes later, she sighed once more for good measure.

"Geez, Jenna, what's wrong with you today?" Gareth couldn't help but ask as he was walking by on his way to the cabin.

Jenna glared at him. "It should be obvious by now. If I have to spend one more week on this blasted boat, I'm going to

go *mad*."

"Don't let that Piers guy hear you say that," Gareth advised her. "He'd be awfully insulted."

Jenna's frown deepened. "Doofus. Who's the one who had to travel with him all these months, you or me?"

Garet, seeing which way the wind was blowing, held up his hands in defeat. "All right, all right, I'm just saying. . . ." And before Jenna could take out more of her frustrations on him, Gareth disappeared into the cabin.

Jenna, after giving the closing cabin door one more poisonous glare for good measure, turned back to staring out at the light-speckled waves. While the nearly cloudless sky and lovely blue-green shade of the ocean would ordinarily cheer Jenna up a little, today they failed completely.

It wasn't just the travelling that was getting her down. Jenna also resented the constant loss of Psynergy that the brand-new Wings of Anemos were causing. It was like having one of those migrating itches—no matter where or how often she scratched, she still was itchy.

Scratching her shoulder reflexively, Jenna mused upon the third thing that was going wrong that day, not to mention the last two weeks. And that thing was Isaac.

Briefly, Jenna's expression softened as she thought of her childhood friend and crush. After being separated for nearly a year from him—and Gareth too, she thought—she had been looking forward to spending some quality time with him, and maybe even confessing her feelings for him. However, there was one problem, and that was a certain blue-haired Imilian healer. Jenna was almost *certain* Isaac was infatuated with

her, but she couldn't figure out how Mia felt in return. Ever since the two groups' wary meeting, Jenna had been avoiding the new girl as best she could, but. . . .

Maybe it's time for a change in strategy, Jenna thought. Didn't someone say it was important to know your enemy? If I spend enough time with Mia, maybe I can figure out whether or not she likes Isaac back. And if she does, I'll just have to do my best to persuade her that someone else is better . . . like Garet. Or maybe my brother—he could do with someone to calm him down. Being that tense all the time can't possibly be healthy.

Decided, Jenna abandoned her position and went below-decks in search of Mia. After poking about for a bit, she discovered her quarry was reading in the room shared by the girls.

Jenna knocked and then entered before Mia could grant her permission. "Hi, there, Mia. What're you reading?"

Mia looked up. "I'm reading a collection of legends about a swordsman and assassin from Izumo. No one knew his real name—he was called Death Every Time in his native tongue. It's really quite exciting."

"Hey, neat!" Jenna was genuinely interested. "I remember hearing about him from somewhere. What does the book focus on? His battles?"

"A little, but it also explores his life. It's really very fascinating; Death Every Time, though he wasn't one himself, came from an era when almost everyone was an Adept. He had to spend a long time training to be able to keep up with everyone else."

"Things sure have changed since the Golden Age, haven't they?" Jenna made a face.

Mia set down the book and kept her eyes on her hands. "Yes . . . Adepts are so rare now. Where I come from, Imil, there are barely a handful of us. The Mercury clan is almost dead there."

"In Vale, there are lots of Adepts still—in fact, everyone is an Adept," Jenna said, but added. "Though I suppose Isaac's told you all about that."

"He's told me a bit, but I get the impression he doesn't like talking about it much. It makes him homesick." Mia looked at Jenna, expression sad. "I can understand the feeling. I miss my apprentices, Megan and Justin."

Jenna bit her lip. "There's really not much for me left in Vale. . . . My parents are being held prisoner in Prox. But at least I have Felix; he means a lot to me." She tried to smile. "Though of course I don't let him know. That's not how it works, after all."

A knock on the door interrupted whatever Mia was about to say.

"Jenna?" Piers' mellow voice came through the wood of the door. "It's your turn to steer the ship."

"Be right there, Piers!" Jenna gave Mia a better smile this time. "Well, I should go. It was nice talking to you." Surprisingly, she meant it. "But could I ask you a favour?"

"I guess so. What is it?" Mia asked.

Jenna paused at the door, one hand on the knob. "Could you loan me that book when you're done? It sounds really

interesting."

Mia smiled. "Of course."

Jenna used the next few weeks to go out of her way to talk to Mia whenever she could. She especially tried to talk to her whenever it looked like the healer was speaking to Isaac. But, oddly enough, speaking with Mia seemed less and less like a means to an end and increasingly a pleasure.

Jenna still didn't lose her competitive spirit, though. When they had stopped off on Hesperia to find supplies, an unusually large group of monsters had attacked them and so Mia was rather overworked as she tried to tend to everyone's injuries.

When Mia moved towards Isaac to heal him, though, Jenna interceded. "Here, I'll use Healing Aura on him and Gareth at the same time, okay?"

"Sure. Thanks for your help." Mia moved off towards Felix.

Jenna smiled in triumph. "Hey Isaac, Gareth!" She jogged over to where the two were sitting on the ground, having long since healed her own injuries. Setting a hand on each boy's arm, she said, "Healing Aura!"

The Psynergy flared briefly over Isaac and Gareth's skin, and their injuries—both within and without—shrank and disappeared altogether.

"Hey, thanks, Jenna!" Gareth grinned. "That feels lots better."

"Yes, thank you." Isaac cast Cure on himself as a final touch-up; Jenna could see its yellow-brown aura light up his skin. "I

suppose I had better go see how Ivan is faring." He rose to his feet and walked over to where the blond was waiting to receive Mia's attentions.

Jenna looked after him for a moment.

That's it, she thought. That's our relationship in a nutshell. Friendly, but casual. . . . This isn't worth it. All the bother, all the effort—nothing's going to change. Isaac won't ever think of me as any more than his childhood friend, no matter what I say or do.

"Hey, Jenna, are you all right?" Piers called. "We're leaving now to find those supplies."

Jenna shook her head to clear it. "I'm coming, I'm coming!" She dashed off to catch up.

"Mia . . . can I ask you something?" Jenna was the only other one left awake. She looked at her friend across the campfire.

"Sure. What is it?" Mia tilted her head slightly, curious.

It took Jenna a long time to move the words from her throat to her mouth and out into the air. "Are you—are you in love with Isaac?"

Mia was taken aback. She stared at Jenna for a few moments before repeating in disbelief, "In love with . . . Isaac?"

"Yes; are you?" Jenna pressed.

Mia gave Jenna a strange look. Then she began to laugh quietly, so as not to disturb the others. "Of course I'm not in

love with Isaac. In fact, I—" She caught herself and stopped. "Why, are you?"

Jenna shook her head. "Not anymore. I just realised this afternoon that he's never going to see me as anything more than his friend who knew him when he was two years old, so there's no point in me really trying to attract his attention. Guess I'm just going to have to look elsewhere for love."

"Well, you'll never have to worry about me stealing men from you," Mia said, a half-smile on her lips.

"Yeah, you're way too nice." Jenna nodded once. "You don't strike me as one of *those* girls, the witches."

Mia said nothing in reply.

Several weeks later, the Adepts and Kraden were nearing Prox. Jenna and Mia, once the issue of Isaac was gone, began to spend more and more time together. Something about their opposing personalities seemed to click really well. Jenna wasn't sure what it was, but she always came away refreshed from talking with Mia. Perhaps it was because it was impossible to argue with her—the girl was simply too nice.

That stormy afternoon, Jenna and Mia were belowdecks, since it was far too chill for either of them to be above unless the responsibility of captaining the ship was thrust upon one of them.

From where she was sitting on her bed, Jenna said, "Your hair's so nice, Mia. But why do you wear it the same way all the time? Here, let me do something with it!"

She grabbed her comb and lurched over—the weather made it difficult to walk—to where Mia was sitting on her bed, reading another book.

Mia set her book down on the bunk. "Well, the ponytail's very practical. I'm too busy to try to be creative with my hair. But you're welcome to try something if you'd like."

"All right." Jenna sat down behind Mia and removed the healer's white hair-holder. "I don't care what I do with my hair or clothes, really, but it's kind of fun to work on other people."

She started brushing out Mia's long aqua hair with long, careful strokes of the comb, being careful not to let it snag painfully in her hair. Mia closed her eyes; her breathing slowed as she relaxed.

Jenna ran her hands through Mia's hair, trying to decide what style would suit her friend the best. Mia's hair wasn't the cleanest—no one's was, after a few weeks straight on a boat with only Douses to wash with—but all the same, Jenna felt real pleasure as she moved her hands through Mia's hair again and again.

Mia's breath caught slightly in her throat as Jenna's hands unwittingly came closer and closer to stroking motions. "Jenna. . . ."

"Yeah?" Jenna stopped, resting her hands on Mia's shoulders.

"Um . . . you remember that night a few weeks ago when you asked me if I was in love with Isaac?" Mia's voice was even quieter than usual.

"What about it?" Jenna resumed running her hands through Mia's hair, then started twisting a few strands

experimentally.

"Well, you remember how I said I wouldn't be stealing any men from you?" Mia asked.

"Uh-huh." Jenna tried to keep the impatience from her voice; she wished Mia would just get to the point already.

Mia was very still. ". . . I'm . . . not interested in men."

"Eh, well, I can understand that. You're a busy person, being the healer of Imil and all—at least, when you're *in* Imil." Jenna nodded to herself. "But there's plenty of time left to be looking for someone special. No rush."

"No, no . . . you don't understand." Jenna watched Mia's shoulders hunch. Even from the angle at which she was sitting, she could tell Mia was genuinely uncomfortable. "I'm not interested in men . . . not now, and not ever."

"Oh. *Oh*." Jenna felt a little foolish for missing Mia's point for so long. "Was that what you were trying to say back then?"

"Yes." Mia's voice was little more than a whisper.

"I . . . see." Jenna's hands stilled once more as she digested this new information. "So . . . how'd you figure this out?"

Mia relaxed slightly when it seemed as though Jenna wasn't about to leap away in disgust. "Well . . . a few boys in my town were interested in me. I dated a couple of them, but whenever they kissed me . . . I didn't feel anything. It wasn't anything like the other girls described. And, well . . . I always had enjoyed looking at women more than men. Men were okay, but women seemed more attractive to me.

"The reason eventually hit me one day when one of my female patients around my age had received a stomach cut from a monster." Mia laughed slightly, but not in amusement. "It was a pretty bad time to figure things out, but I did my best to keep myself professional."

"Wow," was all Jenna said. She felt amazed Mia had confided as much as she did in her—it was a big risk Mia was taking.

After a moment, Jenna casually placed a hand on Mia's shoulder, nearly missing and hitting Mia in the face as the ship rolled particularly hard with a wave. "So . . . what kind of girls are most attractive to you?"

Mia's head dipped downwards. "I find it's . . . the fiery ones. The ones that go out and get life, live exuberantly. I'm nothing like them—I'm slow and methodical and I don't get excited about anything short of a major catastrophe—so it's really, well . . . fascinating for me."

Jenna moved so she was sitting next to Mia. "Have any girl in particular in mind?"

Mia didn't answer for the longest time. When she did, her voice was the quietest yet. ". . . Yes."

Jenna tried to smile, but nerves were weighing down the corners of her mouth. "Well, so long as I'm not *totally* wrong about this, I think I know who you're talking about. And I don't think she really knows if she likes girls as well as boys, but I'm pretty sure she'd be willing to find out. Especially with such a good friend as you, Mia."

"What if it turned out she didn't like women?" Mia asked. "Would her friendship with me be ruined?"

Jenna noticed that they had been moving closer and closer together. In fact, their noses were mere inches apart. "I doubt she thinks so. And you know, I don't think she'd be overly surprised to find out that she was attracted to both sexes. It would probably explain a lot for her."

"So, is it a risk she's willing to take?" Another inch between them disappeared.

"I'd say definitely." Ever closer.

Mia smiled before the distance vanished completely.